



Title: **Parking Provision – Eastern Esplanade, Paignton**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Reason for Report to be Exempt:

Wards Affected: **All Wards**

To: **Transport Working Party** On: **10th May 2012**

Key Decision: **Yes** How soon does the decision need to be implemented **Implemented following legal procedures.**

Change to Budget: **Yes** Change to Policy Framework: **No**

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1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers

1.1 Improved parking provision on the Eastern Esplanade in Paignton

2. Recommendation(s) for decision

2.1 Apply to the Secretary of State for Transport to deregulate the area as public highway and to operate the area in a similar way to a Council Off Street Car Park during the winter and shoulder seasons. To restrict use for parking from the Thursday before spring bank holiday until second week of September, with area becoming pedestrian only in the summer season.

3. Key points and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 Due to the opening of the new Geopark on Paignton Green there is additional parking pressure in this area.
- 3.2 Large numbers of blue badge holders parking on the Eastern Esplanade for long periods of time, some have camper vans and the vehicles can remain in situ for a number of days thus taking up parking spaces for visitors and locals wishing to enjoy the area.
- 3.3 Deregulation of the area would ensure the Council could apply their own parking policies and not subject to Department of Transport guidance.
- 3.4 Allowing the Northern End of the Esplanade to be open to vehicles during the summer could compromise a number of events or lead to additional costs for road closures reduce income from the rental of beach furniture plus affect the current Beach Awards.

For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the supporting information attached.

**Sue Cheriton
Executive Head for Resident & Visitor Services**

Supporting information

A1. Introduction and history

- A1.1 The Eastern Esplanade, Paignton is a public highway that serves the Paignton Beach area. To enable the space to be a more pleasant, pedestrian friendly and a safe area, it is closed during the summer season. The closure period is 26th May to 15th September.
- A1.2 There are currently 218 spaces on the Eastern Esplanade available when open for pay and display customers with a maximum stay of three hours to encourage a turnover of spaces although Blue Badge Holders can park unrestricted.
- A1.3 Council Parking Services has been keeping a record of Blue Badge holders using the Esplanade and this has been steadily increasing and recently reached an all time high of 73 vehicles using the area unrestricted thus reducing the parking capacity for non disabled users to 145 spaces. There are 38 disabled spaces at the nearby Victoria Car Park. If the area is deregulated the Council will be able to better manage the turnover of spaces.
- A1.4 In 2009 the Council reviewed the access arrangements on the Eastern Esplanade the original closure period of the 1st May to 31st Sept was reduced to the 26th May to the 15th Sept. There is a drop off zone at the head of Pier Approach allowing access all year to the businesses for loading purposes only; and enable families to drop off children, less ambulant persons and beach equipment.
- A1.5 The northern end of the Eastern Esplanade contains 81 Spaces and has been previously identified as potentially being opened all year round. However, the large quantity of Blue Badge Holders who could park in this area without time limit would reduce the benefit to other users.
- A1.6 There are a large number of events which use Paignton Green during the summer months between the 26th May and the 15th September. This includes a regular Motorcycle Meetings (BMAD) every Wednesday evening, Paignton Carnival in July which takes place over 10 days and Paignton Regatta which takes place in August over 10 days plus many rowing and sailing events during which times the Eastern Esplanade is required to be closed. Potentially this could mean the northern end would only be open for 6 weeks during this period and the continuous opening and closing could confuse road users.

A2. Risk assessment of preferred option

A2.1 Outline of significant key risks

- A2.2 Increased traffic on the beach front area during the summer will lead to a higher risk for pedestrians. However, additional vehicle movements on the Eastern Esplanade will be subject to a road safety audit and additional traffic calming measures introduced if necessary.

A2.2 Remaining risks

A2.2.1 Beach Awards: The provision of safe access to and from the beach is now included in the beach management criteria for both current beach awards and is a specific requirement. The council are required to provide safe access to the beach and must be able to describe that access across the Greens and roads as safe on the application form.

Paignton Beach is the only beach in the central area with a Blue Flag; the application submitted last December for this years award is for the whole beach. As the application stands at present it would not pass inspection in the main season.

Therefore to consider opening the Northern End of the Eastern Esplanade to vehicles all year could indeed compromise the award altogether.

The Blue Flag criterion

23. *There must be safe access to the beach.*

23.1. *How is it assured that access to the beach is safe? Please describe the access briefly (wooden walkways, steps, ramps, pedestrian crossings, etc.):*

The Quality Coast Award criterion

Aspects of our application for the QCA

- *We are required to provide safe pedestrian access routes from car parks and public transport, to the beach*

A2.2.2 The beach service will be unable to set up the usual deck chair / sun bed operation on the road if the highway is open during the summer season, this will lose income for the council and be a loss of amenity for visitors. This will particularly disadvantage older persons, families and the less mobile. Lack of a deck chair service would certainly generate complaints from members of the public.

Any visitor parking on the promenade will enable them to bring their own beach furniture and equipment, and not rent from the council, further reducing the potential to generate income.

A2.2.3 The promenade bisects two very busy leisure areas Paignton is very popular as a leisure location because it offers safe beaches linked with safe protected surroundings. The introduction of moving vehicles on the promenade during the main summer season will negate one of the main attractions of the area.

A3. Other Options

A3.1 Leave the restrictions and parking capacity unchanged.

A3.2 Open up the northern end of the Eastern Esplanade to vehicles all year.

A4. Summary of resource implications

A4.1 In order to implement the new requirements Officers will be required to design a

scheme and project manage the implementation but it is expected this can be delivered within existing resources.

A5. What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?

A5.1 Should the area be deregulated then an equality impact assessment (EIA) for the overall project will be completed and specific disabled bays will be implemented on the Eastern Esplanade but subject to a maximum stay period.

A6. Consultation and Customer Focus

A6.1 Relevant stakeholders will be consulted on a new scheme subject to Secretary of State approval including the Community Partnership, Seafront traders, Beach Services, Paignton Pier and Apollo Cinema.

A7. Are there any implications for other Business Units?

A7.1 None

Patrick Carney
Service Manager – Streetscene and Place

Appendices

None

Documents available in members' rooms

None

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

None